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TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [UN](#) [EU](#) [BE](#)
SUBJECT: UNGA 3RD COMMITTEE 2008 HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES --
BELGIAN MFA RESPONSES TO OUR DEMARCHE

REF: STATE 95334

Classified By: POL/ECON ACTING Elizabeth Ewing for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY: Speaking both as the Human Rights person at the Belgian MFA and as a participant in the EU Working Group on Human Rights meeting of September 4-5, Francine Chainye told Poloff Judith Heimann:
--There were no surprises in our demarche talking points (reftel) except for Belarus (see para 2, below).
--The GoB is on "precisely the same wavelength" on the evils of No-Action Motions and will be working with other friendly countries to fight them.
--The GOB favors using the UNGA Third Committee whenever possible.
--The GOB is "100 percent in agreement" with us in opposing the efforts to limit freedom of expression and opinion. See para (6) for a request for an advance text on what we would propose as a resolution on this.
--The GoB is also determined to try to maintain the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights in the Sudan
--and asked our help in preventing the loss of mandate for the Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burundi. In this connection, she specifically asks our help in demarching the Burundians. (see para 5, below).
END SUMMARY

12. (C) BELARUS: Given the fact that legislative elections there will take place September 28th, the MFA is very surprised that we don't want to push for a resolution to push them to behave correctly. ACTION REQUESTED: She wonders would it be possible for the USG to reconsider its position if the election process in Belarus turns out not to be a step forward? She said none of the EU countries are planning to present a Belarus resolution but Belgium (and possibly the EU) would like the USG to do so if Belarus does not make more progress than it has to date. The GoB (and the EU's) reason for not presenting one themselves is that, with DPRK and Burma resolutions, they believe that maxes out their capacity for presenting resolutions at one UNGA Third Committee meeting.

13. (C) IRAN: Chinaiye said that, unlike DPRK and Burma, which present few political risks, the Iran resolution is always risky. She recalls the "enormous amount of lobbying" that was needed to avoid a no-motion action on Iran last year and that it nonetheless almost passed. Still, the GoB is prepared to put in the effort again this year.

14. (C) ZIMBABWE: Given the solidarity of the Africa bloc, the MFA sees little point in trying to push for a resolution this time, particularly while the two rivals for political power are engaged in a dialogue.

15. (C) BURUNDI: Chainye raised the fear of losing the Special Rapporteur mandate, given that the Burundians want it to end and the DRC has already lost its rapporteur. The GoB is anxious, because the Burundi situation is fragile and could easily get worse. ACTION REQUESTED: The new Belgian ambassador will have just arrived in Bujumbura tomorrow and won't have his letters of credence yet. Therefore she wonders if the Burundian minister will be going to Washington before going on to the UNGA and if the State Department might be able to demarche her on the need to keep that special rapporteur.

16. (C) THEMATIC RESOLUTIONS: Chainye said the GoB and the EU Working Group are in "100 percent agreement" on the serious threat to freedom of expression and belief that our reftel refers to. ACTION REQUESTED: She would welcome getting an advance copy of our draft text on this matter in order to help align the EU statements on the matter. On the OIC's Defamation of Religions, the GoB and the EU plan to counter this resolution with the EU's own Religious Tolerance resolution, which will be presented to the Third Committee.

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